



Lifestyles

Connie Gay to present 'Betsy Ross Speaks!'

By JILL SHERMAN, DAILY SUN

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THE VILLAGES — You might have thought that Betsy Ross's clipping of five-pointed stars for the first American flag was a carefully executed plan. The real story, according to Connie Gay, is that then-Gen. George Washington, leader of the Continental Army, had requested six-pointed stars. The five-pointed stars, each made with a single snip, were actually born out of convenience in 1776.

"She was very entrepreneurial," Gay said of Ross. "She convinced (Washington and his committee) that the stars should have five points. She had to finish this flag quickly."

Gay will portray Ross in "Betsy Ross Speaks!" The multi-media and interactive presentation is scheduled for 6 p.m. Oct. 22 at Paradise Recreation Center. It is part of the Special Speakers series offered through The Villages Lifelong Learning College.

Tavares residents Connie and Jeff Gay have performed MurderWatch® Mystery Theater for 20 years at a Walt Disney World resort. Jeff also travels to give his "Ben Franklin Speaks!" presentation.

Gay has been very involved in her husband's research of Colonial times, which spurred her writing of "Betsy Ross Speaks!"

"I found some interesting (data) about Betsy Ross along the way," Gay said. "They may be part of a legend, but they are pretty much apropos, if not a little humorous. Her story has mainly come from family and friends (to whom) she had told her story," Gay said. "I believe the research supports it."

Ross is said to have been Washington's personal seamstress. She and Washington also attended Christ Church and typically sat near each other with their spouses. That said, Ross and Washington were quite familiar with each other.

Gay is hopeful the story of Betsy Ross will appeal to tri-county residents. "Betsy Ross Speaks!" will provide insight into the woman credited with sewing the first American flag. "Even though she was a woman," Gay said, "she was a Revolutionary War hero."

Tickets are available through TVLLC. Cost is \$8 for college patrons, \$13 for Villages residents and \$18 for general public. Call 753-3035 for tickets or information.